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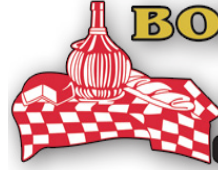
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## New Investors at Holy Family



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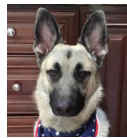
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## VALLEY PATRIOT OF THE MONTH

### SFC Chadwick Larter and the MA National Guard

**John Cuddy**

HERO VETERAN COLUMNIST

The Massachusetts National Guard has been defending our freedoms since 1636!

Sergeant First Class (SFC) Chadwick Larter, Recruiting Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) tells his story, in his own words. I was born and raised in

Massachusetts, I grew up in Ayer MA where I attended school and graduated from Ayer High School. I have one other younger brother who later down the road joined the US Marines. While attending school and growing up next to Fort Devens now just Devens, I developed an interest in the military and looked up to military service members. I remember

watching 9/11 happen while I was in fifth grade and at that time realized that I wanted to serve and protect my country. After seeing several of my friends in high school join the various branches of the military I decided as a 17-year-old that MA Army National Guard would be the most beneficial decision for me as it would give me the same training and skills as active-duty army, allow me to pursue a college education and start a civilian career right away. I enlisted into the MA Army National Guard at Boston MEPS at 17 years old October 31st, 2008, as a 13F (Fire Support Specialist). I chose this because it was something that no civilian job could do but would give me valuable skills that could still assist me in the civilian career.

After enlisting, and before graduating high school, I attended the Recruit Sustainment Program the MA Army National Guard offered to prepare recruits to attend basic. This training happened once every month from Friday night into Sunday afternoon. It served as a mock basic training where drill sergeants prepared us through various activities to physically and mentally prepare us to arrive to basic training prepared. This served extremely beneficial for me and the other high school students that enlisted. After graduating Ayer High School, I attended basic training and my MOS (military occupational Specialty training) at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. I learned all the

basic skills of becoming a soldier, as well as my job skills focusing on land navigation, communications, and coordinating and directing artillery fire on targets.

Following my unforgettable training at Fort Sill, I returned to Massachusetts. Being in the Army National Guard, I was able to stay within Massachusetts and conduct my service one weekend a month, and my field training for two weeks during the summer, where we would go stay in the field and practice and refine our military skill set. After returning I immediately enrolled at Worcester State College (now Worcester State University). After about a year I volunteered for a deployment to Afghanistan, where I served in the Kabul, the capital. I had many great experiences overseas along with lifelong friendships with those I served. Over the following years of service, I conducted additional in state emergency responses for ice storms and hurricanes. I also went to Germany for a training mission, and a tour to Saudi Arabia. I took a temporary active-duty job to help integrate the US Army's new combat fitness test in 2018. All this while holding a full-time job as a Corrections Officer for the MA Department of Correction. Now with over 15 years, multiple tours and having attended useful and career enhancing military schools such as master fitness trainer which translates to a CrossFit

HERO: PAGE 26



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# No Sympathy for Roxbury Residents

The people of Roxbury - in particular Roxbury's Black residents - are furious at Democrat Governor Maura Healey for taking away their community center to house the illegal aliens that the Biden Administration has purposely brought into the country. Next, they will be thrown out of public housing.

We completely understand their anger and frustration as they are being treated like second-class citizens in their own country, shoved aside while the Democrats make the needs of illegal aliens their top priority and ignore their impact on the Black community.

But, it's hard to have much sympathy for them when you take into account the fact that they voted for Joe Biden and the Democrat Party agenda by an 8 to 1 margin in the last presidential election.

As a candidate for president, Joe Biden promised that he was going to throw the Mexican border wide open and welcome in every person on the planet without so much as a background check.

He then viciously attacked anyone who objects to his open-border platform, calling them "racist" and heartless "Nazis," using fear and division every time his poll numbers went down.

Even Democrat Governor Maura Healey - with all her white privilege - ran for office promising to back the Democrat Party's efforts to keep the borders open, and spend your tax money on services for illegal aliens because, "white supremacy!"

She didn't care that a historic number of Massachusetts residents are living on the streets (especially in Roxbury) with no help from their elected officials at all.

Yet, knowing all of this - and despite the fact that illegal immigration impacts Black communities the most - the people of Roxbury all ran out and voted for Joe Biden (and then two years later, Maura Healey), in record numbers anyway.

So, it's hard to feel bad for them now that they are getting what they voted for.

We would be delighted if they finally learned their lesson from this experience of betrayal, and abandoned the Democrat Party the way the Democrats have abandoned them over and over again.

But, we have all seen this movie before and we all know how it ends - including the Democrats.

They know all too well that they can abuse Black and Latino voters in between elections and all they have to do is yell about "white supremacy" come election time and their base of support will come running back for fear that the evil White Republicans are gonna "put them all back in chains."

We think this would be a good time to remind the people of Roxbury (and the people of Lawrence who are up next) of that famous quote by former President Barack Obama who once said, "elections have consequences."

Well, the people of Roxbury are now suffering the consequences of voting enmasse for their Democrat masters.

Yet, as mad as they are right now, we all know that come November they will do it again because the irrational fear of "white supremacy" is far more important to them than losing public housing and a community center.

We say, they should stop all their complaining now and just take it, because there's a lot more coming after the next election! ♦

## Judge Debra Squires-Lee Should Show Progressive Solidarity With Migrants

### And Return To Living In A Tent

**Bharani Padmanabhan MD PhD**  
VALLEY PATRIOT CONTRIBUTOR

When interviewed by the spineless Governor's Council after declaring she wanted "to serve" on the bench, Debra Squires-Lee recalled time spent in Arizona, California, Colorado, Montana, Oregon, and Wyoming and said "From the time I was 10 until I was 15 we were an itinerant construction worker family. We basically lived paycheck to paycheck. Sometimes we lived in tents in state parks, but my brothers and I loved living out West. We swam and fished. We played very elaborate games, and I read a ton of books."

At that point Squires-Lee had spent years as a corporate lawyer and lived in a big pile in tony Hingham (Median home price \$1.2 million). In 2014, she was one of the first to host a fundraiser in her own home for the progressive Maura Healey.

Squires-Lee first came to my attention when she lied about Dr. Ryan Welter to favor corporate big shots. First, she arranged for his brief to be concealed from the court docket though he filed it. The clerk-magistrate is on record that he personally handed the brief to her in chambers. Squires-Lee then lied in her decision memorandum that Dr. Welter did not file that brief, before then quoting from it in that same memorandum. You can't make this stuff up. The missing brief suddenly showed up on the docket the same time as her memorandum (Case 2173CV00120). That tells you all you need to know about Judge Debra Squires-Lee. She has also made me view the Palatino typeface with ambivalence, though I had unreservedly loved it previously.

When Florida Governor DeSantis pointedly sent illegal immigrants to progressive Massachusetts a year ago, the outpouring of love and affection for them from Massachusetts leaders was life-affirming. Then the immigrants just kept coming. As a direct result, Massachusetts natives are on course to losing the protection of a 1983 law that granted them the right to shelter. That right is going away thanks to the very progressive Maura Healey and her strong booster Squires-Lee.

Here's how that went down.

A progressive outfit called Lawyers For Civil Rights (LCR) attached the names of a couple of homeless people to a lawsuit which carefully ensured that Maura Healey's name didn't appear on it (2384CV02449 Alcarraz, Gloria et al vs. Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities). LCR complained that Governor Healey gave the Legislature only 30 days notice before she unilaterally changed the state's shelter regulation, though the law requires the Governor to give the Legislature 90 days to do something.

And then LCR's lawyers, Jacob Love and Oren Sellstrom, did not object when the case was handled by Judge Squires-Lee herself. I assume the homeless plaintiffs had no clue.

So, friends, you will never guess what happened next!

Squires-Lee handed Maura Healey a total victory and dismissed the case within three days flat, saying that 30 days notice was just fine.

After Squires-Lee dismissed the case, our progressive ACLU bravely filed an amicus brief, unless Squires-Lee had concealed that too from the docket.

The only question I have is, did Love and Sellstrom intentionally abuse their plaintiffs just to burnish their progressive public image knowing that Squires-Lee would of course back Healey no matter what - making this a cynical progressive

JUDGE: PAGE 9

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# Three Groundbreaking Senate Bills Champion Consumer, Animal Protection

Pavel Payano

STATE SENATOR, 1ST ESSEX DISTRICT

In a series of landmark decisions, the Massachusetts State Senate recently passed three crucial bills aimed at enhancing consumer and animal protection across the Commonwealth. Here are some of the bills that passed the Senate and are waiting for the Massachusetts House of Representatives to further consider.

## 1. PROTECTING CONSUMERS DURING REAL ESTATE APPRAISALS

The Massachusetts Senate has taken a significant step toward enhancing consumer protection in real estate transactions by passing S.2550—An Act providing consumers with equal protection for all real estate appraisals. This legislation aims to establish comprehensive statewide standards for real estate appraisals, necessitating that all evaluations be exclusively conducted by certified or licensed appraisers.

Presently, Massachusetts law permits individuals, regardless of their education or experience, to perform valuation services for various purposes, such as estate settlements, divorces, and business dissolutions. This lack of regulation exposes consumers to undue risks, as unlicensed individuals may offer unsupported valuations without accountability or oversight. Moreover, the absence of licensure leaves consumers with no recourse through the state's Division of Occupational Licensure when harm occurs.

In stark contrast, 42 other states ensure consumer protection by mandating the involvement of certified or licensed appraisers in all real estate

appraisals, according to the Appraisal Subcommittee of the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council. Massachusetts currently falls short in safeguarding consumers, as licensing is only obligatory for federally related transactions like certain mortgages. This gap allows unlicensed individuals to conduct real estate valuation services for any other purpose.

The proposed legislation outlines stringent criteria for individuals seeking state certification or licensing for appraisals. These standards include completing 200 to 300 hours of classroom appraisal education, passing exams, participating in 15 hours of classroom instruction on the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice, accumulating 1,000 to 3,000 hours of supervised appraisal experience, passing a 4- to 6-hour national licensing examination, and completing 28 hours of continuing education every two years, with 7 hours focused on the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice.

Real estate appraisal professionals strongly support the effort to increase appraisal licensure, emphasizing the importance of qualified professionals in the appraisal process. With the Senate's approval, the legislation now advances to the Massachusetts House of Representatives for further consideration, marking a critical move toward standardized and consumer-focused real estate appraisals in the Commonwealth.

## 2. PROHIBITION OF CAT DECLAWING IN MASSACHUSETTS

In a dedicated effort to safeguard the well-being of feline companions, the Massachusetts Senate has unanimously

**State Senator Pavel Payano with Governor Maura Healey**

passed S.2552—An Act prohibiting inhumane feline declawing. If enacted, this legislation would position Massachusetts as the third state in the nation to prohibit the cruel practice of declawing cats, permitting it only in cases of medical necessity as determined by a licensed veterinarian.

The act of declawing involves the amputation of the first bone on each toe, while tendonectomies entail cutting a tendon in each toe responsible for controlling claw extension. Cats subjected to declawing procedures are at an increased risk of experiencing various health issues, including paw pain, back pain, infection, tissue death, and potential difficulties in using their legs properly. The Humane Society of the United States reports that declawed cats are more prone to nerve damage and bone spurs due to claw regrowth. It is important to note that declawing is often performed for human convenience and to prevent damage to furniture, rather than for medical necessity.

The legislation specifically targets the prevention of declawing for non-medical reasons, introducing civil penalties for violations. This groundbreaking move positions Massachusetts alongside New York and Maryland as the third state to institute a ban on declawing, eliciting commendation from prominent animal rights and welfare organizations, including the MSPCA-Angell, the Animal Legal Defense Fund, and The Humane Society of the United States. As the bill progresses, advocates hope it sets a precedent for humane treatment of animals, signaling a positive shift in the approach to feline welfare across the nation.

### 3. WHEELCHAIR WARRANTY REFORM

In a unanimous decision, the Massachusetts Senate gave the green light to S.2541—An Act expanding wheelchair warranty protections for consumers with disabilities. This law beefs up the rights of wheelchair users, making it mandatory for all wheelchairs to have warranties, extending the

minimum warranty period to two years, and laying down standards for repairs and replacements.

Under this law, all wheelchairs sold or leased in Massachusetts must now include express warranties. This is a notable change from the current rule, which only requires express warranties for customized wheelchairs. The legislation also extends the warranty period for wheelchairs from one year to two years, aligning Massachusetts with states like Rhode Island and Connecticut.

To address delays in repairs, the bill insists that wheelchair service providers remotely diagnose repair issues within three business days after a consumer reports a problem. An in-person assessment must then be provided within four business days.

If a wheelchair user can't use their in-warranty chair during repairs, the bill mandates that manufacturers or dealers either reimburse them or provide a loaner wheelchair within four business days for most wheelchairs, or within eight business days for highly customized ones.

The bill further requires manufacturers and dealers to cover any additional costs during the repair process for in-warranty wheelchairs. For out-of-warranty wheelchairs, the legislation puts a stop to insurers requiring consumers to go through a complicated prior authorization process for repairs under \$1,000. Additionally, the bill empowers the Attorney General's office to take legal action against service providers engaging in unfair or deceptive practices.

Now, as the legislation heads to the Massachusetts House of Representatives, advocates are optimistic about its passage, solidifying Massachusetts as a leader in protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities. Notably, a similar version of the legislation passed the Senate in 2022, but unfortunately, it did not progress further in the legislative process.  $\diamond$

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# Investigating Fraud in Our Public Benefit Programs

Much of our focus in the State Auditor’s Office is on conducting audits and reports that identify ways state agencies and organizations can improve accessibility to government services and resources, while helping to ensure greater accountability and transparency across our state government.

I’d like to share a bit about the incredible work of our Bureau of Special Investigations (BSI) unit, a team dedicated to strengthening the social safety net in Massachusetts by investigating potential fraud in our public benefit programs.

This unit investigates programs administered by the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) and the Division of Medical Assistance, which administers MassHealth. In addition, BSI has an agreement with the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) to investigate fraud in that program as well.

Our team continues to focus on ways we can help make a meaningful impact by improving best practices, increasing accessibility to resources and programs, and helping identify ways we can hold organizations accountable across state government. BSI’s annual report highlights their critical work during the



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last fiscal year. BSI receives referrals for investigation from its agency partners, public tips, federal agencies, and through the use of its data analytics tools. The public can report potential fraud to BSI online at <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/report-public-benefit-fraud-to-the-office-of-the-state-auditor> and via phone at (617) 727-6771. Complaints are always confidential.

As we continue to develop new practices, in collaboration with other state agencies, to help identify potential

fraud, more cases are identified and evaluated. The increased workload is possible with advanced data analytic tools and new pathways of communication. For example, our work with DTA is essential and, as they become aware of a potential fraud case, BSI is able to automatically begin investigating the situation.

Catching fraud early and preventing our tax dollars from being wasted ensure that families who truly need this helping hand are not left in the cold due to bad actors. During this past fiscal year, the

total amount of fraud BSI identified was \$12,322,688, with 5,100 investigations completed - a 40.8% increase from FY22. 782 of those cases had fraud identified.

Another important role BSI has in reporting fraudulent cases is the ability to recommend cases for prosecution to the most severe cases of fraud to the Attorney General’s Office (AGO) after considering the intent and the potential to serve as a deterrent to future fraud.

Public assistance is meant to be of service for folks in need. Even if we can’t imagine ever needing assistance, these programs can provide vital services and serve as a social safety net for all of us. That is why my office will continue to promote accountability to ensure these programs are preserved by helping to catch fraud and misspending.

As always, if you have any questions or would like to provide feedback to our team, please feel free to contact my office via email at [auditor@sao.state.ma.us](mailto:auditor@sao.state.ma.us) or by phone at (617) 727-2075. And if you’re ever in the State House, I hope you’ll stop by and visit our team in room 230!

Warm regards,  
Diana ♦

## Maura Healy Kicks Off Black History Month By Closing Recreation Center in Roxbury

Kevin Dube  
NORTH ANDOVER GOP COMMITTEE

Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey has chosen the perfect way to show how Democrats care about disadvantaged Black citizens with her decision to close the Melnea Cass Recreation Complex in order to house illegal aliens on the first day of Black History Month. The complex, located at 120 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. serves some of the most disadvantaged Black residents of the Commonwealth. Governor Healey’s action is the latest of her administration’s and Beacon Hill Democrats’ failure to address the influx of illegal aliens into Massachusetts thanks to our reckless right to shelter law. This, in addition to other measures designed to attract illegal aliens to the Commonwealth, underscores how the Democrats truly

view the interests of US Citizens, especially our most disadvantaged. These being the people they pretend to care about.

Melnea Cass, known as the First lady of Roxbury, was a civil rights activist and proponent of women’s suffrage. She worked to organize Black citizens, and, after ratification of the 19th Amendment, helped register women to vote. Bear in mind no Democrats in either the House or the Senate voted in favor of the 15th Amendment, which gave lacks the right to vote. On the 19th Amendment 94% of House and 74% of Senate Republicans voted Yea while 40% of Democrat House members and 57% of Senate Democrats voted against it. Mrs. Cass was the President of the Boston branch of the NAACP from 1962 to 1964. The center that bears her name which Gov. Healey

has appropriated was originally dedicated in 1967 by Republican Governor John Volpe. On May 22, 1966 then Massachusetts Attorney General Edward W. Brooke honored Mrs. Cass, and that day was declared Melnea Cass Day. Edward Brooke, a Republican, went on to become the first AfricanAmerican since 1874 to be elected to the Senate, and the first AfricanAmerican ever to be re-elected to the US Senate. With all that Republican involvement is it any wonder Governor Healey wants to erase Mrs. Cass’s legacy?

Roxbury is a microcosm of the failures of Democratic policies. Poverty and crime are rampant. The boulevard that bears Melnea Cass’s name is part of “Mass and Cass” where addicts line up homeless in the streets. Why there? Why is help not afforded them? The

Democrats certainly rely on the 90%+ of their votes they get every other November, but the rest of the time?

Governor Healey’s decision to make this move on the first day of Black History Month is a fitting tribute to the party of slavery, the KKK, and Jim Crow’s true feelings about disadvantaged Black American citizens. Let this be a reminder of not only the real history, but the present state of the Democratic Party regarding how they treat Black Americans, and average working-class US Citizens in general. Who do Democrats truly represent?

Had enough? Please reach out to me at [northandovergop@gmail.com](mailto:northandovergop@gmail.com). Together we can put Massachusetts back on track and end the inherent racism and abuse of US Citizens by the Democratic Party. ♦

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# Addressing the Rumors on Steward/Holy Family

**Ryan Hamilton**  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Over the course of the last month, there have been several rumors about the futures of Holy Family, Methuen, and Haverhill.

I, along with legislative delegations of Methuen, Haverhill, and the Merrimack Valley, have been working diligently with the State Department of Health and Human Services and those working at the two hospitals to ensure that they stay open.

Steward, who owns both Holy Family locations, as well as several other hospitals in the commonwealth of Massachusetts, has come under severe financial stress that has become public over the past several weeks. This led to severe concern within the community that one or both hospitals might close.

In response to these rumors, the Merrimack Valley legislative delegation toured both hospitals to assess the working conditions, the morale of those working there, and the care being administered to the patients.

I'm happy to report that we have some of the most hard-working and dedicated doctors, nurses, and support staff working at Holy Family. Although most are nervous about what has been

reported in the news, these professionals are focused on administering the best care possible to those coming to their hospitals.

I am pleased to report that a new investor has invested in Steward Hospitals. This will allow both Holy Family, Haverhill, and Methuen, to keep their doors open to the public. This will allow the hospitals to expand some of their care.

This news has reassured all receiving services or working at Holy Family. I can promise you that we will still be working with both Steward and the State to ensure that we have a long-term plan to keep Holy Family open for the residents of the Merrimack Valley.

This past week, I had the pleasure of visiting the Tenney Grammar School in Methuen to listen to the eighth-grade class's presentation of their civics projects. They did not disappoint. These students were prepared and delivered informative presentations about the project they decided to undertake.

These projects, to name a few, range anywhere from community gardens to solar farms and passes so that students' parents and administrators knew which bus they had taken to get home that day.

The time and research that went into preparing these projects shows the



dedication and the lengths the students are willing to go to make their school and community a better place.

I also got the opportunity to sit down and have lunch with the leaders of each project. We discussed what I do for work, where they planned on attending high school next year, and who would be winning the Super Bowl this year. It was an impressive group, and I hope that wherever they go, they continue to be leaders inside and outside the classroom. If these are the future leaders of Methuen

and the Merrimack Valley, our future will be very bright.

I want to remind everyone that budget season in the State House is upon us. For any group looking for state resources, don't hesitate to get in touch with me or my office, and we would be happy to walk through that process with you.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact my office with any ideas, concerns, or questions at [ryan.hamilton@mahouse.gov](mailto:ryan.hamilton@mahouse.gov) or 617-722-2090. ♦

# Dr. Agrawal is New President/CEO of Lawrence General

Lawrence Mayor Brian A. DePeña was honored to host and once again welcome Dr. Abha Agrawal, MD, FACP, FACHE, the new President and CEO of Lawrence General Hospital.

Mayor DePeña spoke on how to improve patient care in emergency cases, create better conditions so that the health center becomes a hospital of options and not a last resort for our residents.

The reduction in time for primary care for our patients is also a top priority of Mayor DePeña.

"We need to continue working to maintain good quality services with more equity in health insurance, as well as incorporating mental health awareness back into the community through the hospital. The diversity of languages was a vital point during this meeting."

Dr. Abha Agrawal said she was pleased to have chosen the City of Lawrence as her next destination to lead and that she has good faith in all our Lawrencians to achieve an even higher level in the health care.

A little about Dr. Abha Agrawal's life:

Dr. Agrawal, who began at Lawrence General on January 2, is a practicing internal medicine physician, accomplished health care executive, Fulbright Scholar, clinical informaticist, and author who comes to Lawrence General after serving as chief medical officer at Humboldt Park Health in Chicago. She is also the founder of A4 Clinics in India, a globally recognized group of advanced neurorehabilitation centers with the primary mission of reducing the burden of preventable disability from neurological disorders in India through advanced technology. In addition to healthcare leadership roles,

Dr. Agrawal's career includes renowned academic appointments as well as numerous awards and honors.

As previously announced in November, Dr. Agrawal's appointment culminated in a six-month search process by the Board of Trustees, assisted by one of the industry's leading healthcare recruiting firms. Outgoing Board chair Mike Mancuso, who will continue his volunteer work for the hospital, says Dr. Agrawal has a proven reputation as a transformative leader with the excitement, skills, and experience needed to empower the Lawrence General team and meet the ever-changing needs of the people they serve.

"Above all, Dr. Agrawal has been a champion for advancing health equity and patient care throughout her career," says Mancuso. "The Board is confident she is the leader we need to ensure Lawrence General Hospital will thrive in today's challenging healthcare environment."

The announcement also marks the appointment of Rosemarie Day as Chair of the Board for the Lawrence General Hospital Board of Trustees. Day is the founder & CEO of Day Health Strategies. She is a health reform pioneer who has worked through the value chain of the healthcare industry, from start-ups to major corporations to the government. The author of *Marching Toward Coverage* (Beacon Press, 2020), Day says her goals include improving access to health care in the U.S. and making health care more consumer-focused and patient-centered. She is confident the hospital has the strategy, people, passion and commitment to become even stronger as the region's destination community-focused hospital



and health system.

"I am excited to be stepping into the role of Lawrence General Hospital's board chair," says Day. "I, along with the rest of the board, look forward to working with Dr. Agrawal and her team to achieve our vision and strategy for the hospital. I am confident that Lawrence General will continue to lead the way in quality care, innovation and technology, and patient experience with a strong focus on health equity."

Helping Day to lead the Board are Vice Chair Dan Rivera, Treasurer Laurel Sweeney and Secretary Carol Powers. Additionally, the Lawrence General Hospital Board of Trustees is welcoming three new members. Jose H. Cruz, senior vice president and

commercial lending officer at Reading Cooperative Bank, Michael Sklar, former CEO and current chairman of the board at Black Diamond Networks in Andover, and Vilma Martínez-Dominguez, executive director and CEO of Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, join the other eight Board members who generously donate their time to support the mission of Lawrence General Hospital.

Lawrence General Hospital Trustee Shalimar Quiles, principal of Oliver Elementary School in Lawrence and a resident of Lawrence says, "I am thrilled for our community and for the incredibly deserving patients that will benefit from the contributions of our new President and board members."



# Why I Support the HERO Act

Estela Reyes

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

As we embark on another legislative session, I am filled with enthusiasm to serve you, the resilient members of our community. The 4th Essex District and the entire state of Massachusetts rely on elected officials to protect their needs and better their environment, schools, health, and more.

There are a plethora of important bills which touch on these topics. I hope to see many of them made into law this year. While I have your attention here, I would like to use this space to advocate for one bill in particular- the HERO Act. The HERO Act, H.4172 filed by Governor Healey, is now before The Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs of which I am a member. I want to begin by expressing my support of this legislation along with my solidarity with veterans.

The HERO Act can be understood from three major categories: benefit expansion, commitment to inclusivity and greater representation, and modernization of veteran services. These are broken down based on policy incentives, tax credits, and statute changes. Benefit expansion is needed now for veterans. With inflation and high rent, we must increase annuity



accordingly. The HERO Act will do just that. Another key measure under veteran benefits is access to behavioral health treatments. We cannot let our veterans suffer alone.

This act will reimburse outpatient behavioral health care visits. A third, but not final, measure under benefit expansion has to do with lengthening the timeframe for veterans to participate in the Active-Duty Service Buyback program. We heard testimony from many veterans who expressed difficulty with managing their enrollment in this program in 180 days or less. This bill wants to alleviate that stressor by

expanding that timeframe to 10 years. The second key goal of this bill, commitment to inclusivity and greater representation, makes long overdue changes that will largely support our women, minority, and LGBTQ+ identifying veterans. The first step here is to expand the definition of ‘veteran’ to allow for more veterans to apply for annuity. The current definition in Massachusetts lags behind the federal definition. This change will more closely align the two. It will also update the definition of a veteran dependent to match the definition used by the Probate and Family Court.

The final key measure I will mention here is the creation of a pilot program to support same-sex couples who have been denied reimbursement for IVF treatments under the Veterans Health Administration. This is more inclusive to same-sex couples who wish to have a family and get the same support as veteran couples of the opposite sex. I support these changes because all veterans deserve to be recognized and supported equally.

Veteran services are desperately in need of modernization. The modernization detailed in H. 1472 includes language, standardization, mental health support, overall healthcare, and the operation of veteran cemeteries. It has been too long since state officials have come together to pass updated legislation for our veterans. I am proud to take this stand for veterans now.

If you have any questions regarding the HERO Act or any other pieces of legislation, as always, please reach out to my office through my email [estela.reyes@mahouse.gov](mailto:estela.reyes@mahouse.gov). I look forward to hearing from constituents and considering their perspective across many areas of expertise. ♦

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# Don't Vote for Republicans like Beth Lindstrom

By Brian Genest

VALLEY PATRIOT DRACUT COLUMNIST

If you're a Republican and you care about the future of the Massachusetts Republican Party, you should care about the outcome of the upcoming State Committee elections. The 80 members of the Republican Party's governing body, one man and woman from each of the state's 40 senate districts, will be elected on the March 5 Presidential Primary ballot. The results will determine just how Republican the party will be for the next four years. That's why Republicans like Beth Lindstrom of Groton are exactly what we don't need on the State Committee.

An establishment insider, Beth Lindstrom is probably best known for her embarrassingly awful performance in the 2018 Republican primary race for U.S. Senate. At the time, Beth Lindstrom was touting herself as the only candidate who could beat Elizabeth Warren in the general election. The only problem for Beth Lindstrom was that she couldn't beat anyone in her primary: she finished dead last in that three-way race with 18% of the Republican vote, behind winners Geoff Diehl who got 55% and second-place finisher John Kingston who got 27%. In other words, Beth Lindstrom choked. Big time.

Speaking of choking, do you remember Beth Lindstrom's hometown performance at the Groton Republican Town Committee when she was a Senate

candidate? She'd probably like you to forget, but it was completely memorable for all the wrong reasons. First, Beth Lindstrom told that group of conservative Republicans that she was in favor of abortion. Then, Beth Lindstrom told them she was in favor of gun control. If that wasn't enough proof that she was out of touch with her audience, Beth Lindstrom also told them, repeatedly, that she worked as an undersecretary for former Gov. Mitt Romney. The third time Beth Lindstrom mentioned it, someone in the group shouted out, "Why do you keep saying that? No one here can stand Mitt Romney."

Hopefully, Beth Lindstrom will be smart enough to keep her liberal positions and past associations with the RINOs off the establishment-financed junk mail that will be flooding the mailboxes of real Republicans soon asking you to vote for her. But considering Beth Lindstrom is the most likely State Committee candidate to study for an IQ or urine test, I wouldn't be so sure of it.

If you see Beth Lindstrom, ask her if she's forgotten about the Republican Party and where she's been hiding lately. Groton Republicans haven't seen her at a town committee meeting in years and years and years. You have a better chance of seeing Beth Lindstrom on a milk carton than you do at a Republican gathering. And why isn't Beth Lindstrom

even a member of the Groton RTC, if she thinks she is good enough to be the State Committeewoman representing her hometown and a bunch of others?

Here's another question to ask Beth Lindstrom if you see her: Do you support Donald Trump for President? Like her political pal, former Gov. Charlie Baker, Never-Trumper Beth Lindstrom will get weaker in the knees and even more pale than usual. If you do see Beth Lindstrom, it will probably be in a selfie with Nikki Haley, Mitt Romney, or Chris Doughty. You get the picture: establishment losers stick together. What you won't see is any pictures of Beth Lindstrom knocking on doors in Groton or anywhere else to support down-ticket Republican candidates.

There's some more bad news for Beth Lindstrom: her opponent Kathy Lynch is the real deal, a well-known conservative grassroots activist who has been working to build the Republican Party, including as chair of the Westford Republican Town Committee. As a member of the State Committee for the last four years, Kathy Lynch has strongly supported our Republican candidates and causes, including President Trump. Kathy Lynch has been recruiting Republican candidates to run for office. Kathy Lynch has been fighting to protect life, ensure election integrity and support the rights of gun owners. Kathy Lynch has been fighting to stop mail-in voting, sanctuary



cities and mask mandates. Kathy Lynch has been working hard. Meanwhile, Beth Lindstrom has been doing absolutely nothing—and absolutely nothing to help Republicans, except herself. Is it any wonder why the Groton Republican Town Committee has passed over Beth Lindstrom and instead endorsed Kathy Lynch?

This should be an easy choice for Republicans on March 5th, too. Vote for Kathy Lynch, a conservative Republican who actually does work for the Massachusetts Republican Party, for State Committeewoman. A vote for Beth Lindstrom is a vote for Mitt Romney. A vote for Beth Lindstrom is a vote for Charlie Baker. A vote for Beth Lindstrom is a vote against President Trump.

-- Brian Genest is a member of the Massachusetts Republican State Committee representing the Second Essex & Middlesex district of Dracut, Andover, Lawrence, and Tewksbury. ♦

## Bridging the Gap: My Commitment to Pay Equity

Francisco Paulino

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, a troubling disparity exists that undercuts the very principles of fairness and equality we hold dear. As it stands, women earn only 82 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterparts for the same work. This harsh inequality not only undermines the economic security of half our population but also diminishes our collective prosperity. The situation is even more dire for Latinas and women of color, who face an even wider pay gap, further exacerbating issues of economic inequality and justice.

My dedication to eradicating pay inequality is not just a matter of principle but a legislative priority. As State Representative for the 16th Essex District, I have proudly supported and co-sponsored An Act Relative to Salary Range Transparency (H1849), a critical piece of legislation designed to bring transparency to salary negotiations and ensure a fairer workplace for all. This act represents a significant step forward, challenging the status quo and advocating for a system where pay is determined by skill and responsibility, not gender or ethnicity.

The impact of our efforts extends beyond the halls of the legislature to

the streets of Lawrence and Methuen, where my office has been instrumental in empowering women, particularly Latinas and women of color, to seek and achieve pay equity. We have stood side by side with countless women, aiding them in navigating the complexities of wage negotiations and advocating for their rightful place in the workforce.

Among these stories of resilience and determination is that of Jossery Diaz, a gifted construction contractor whose journey toward certification as a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and Women Business Enterprise (WBE) symbolizes the broader struggle for recognition and equality. This certification is more than a title; it is a gateway to opportunities, enabling hardworking women like Jossery to access state and federal grants, finances, and contracts that were once beyond reach.

As a father, I envision a Massachusetts where my daughter, and every child, can aspire to any profession without the barriers of gender bias, ethnic discrimination, or systemic inequality. I dream of a state where success is measured by one's contribution and character, not by gender or the color of one's skin.

The journey toward pay equity is a collective endeavor that requires the commitment of each one of us. It is a



call to action for lawmakers, business leaders, and community members to embrace the necessity for change and to work tirelessly toward a future marked by fairness and equity for all, regardless of gender or ethnicity.

As your State Representative, I am wholeheartedly committed to upholding the very fabric upon which our nation was founded — the belief that every individual has the inherent

right to pursue and achieve their fullest potential. This conviction drives my every endeavor in service to our community, guiding my efforts to ensure that the principles of fairness, opportunity, and equality are not merely ideals, but realities for all. Together, we will continue to champion these values, fostering a society where every person can realize their highest aspirations, unimpeded by inequality or injustice. ♦



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show trial, OR are they unprincipled cowards who spinelessly stayed silent about the glaring bias instead of robustly objecting on behalf of their clients and demanding that Squires-Lee recuse herself from this case?

If Love and Sellstrom had publicly announced that had they but heard of Twitter they would of course have demanded recusal, and then filed an appeal on conflict and bias grounds, I could have accepted that they didn't put on a progressive show trial. Now we know better.

In the meantime, the homeless natives of Massachusetts are living in Animal Farm, looking at the progressive Maura Healey and the progressive Debra Squires-Lee, and wondering what just happened: “The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which.”

I call on Judge Debra Squires-Lee to heed her buddy Maura Healey's noble advice, turn her Hingham home over to immigrants, you know, Zhivago-style, and choose, à la Angela Merkel's parents in 1954, a simple fulfilled progressive life in a tent. Way better than depriving the Black people of Roxbury of what little they still have.

Then the spineless Governor's Council rubber stamped Maura Healey's SJC proxy, Elizabeth Dewar, straight from rubber stamping in the AGO to rubber stamping from the bench. This means they rubber stamped a rubber stamper. Justice Peter Sacks will follow her onto the bench soon, I predict. The next Huey Long is being made.

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# Early College Lowell

## A Partnership Between Lowell High School and Middlesex Community College

### KANE

VALLEY PATRIOT MASCOT/COLUMNIST

Kane learned that all students at Lowell High School are eligible to attend college level classes at Middlesex Community College while enrolled in their junior and senior year of high school. Kane thought this was a great way to earn college credits at no cost to the student, expose students to the college setting, and get a jump start on earning credits. “Can you believe that students could actually graduate from high school with up to a year of college credits already completed?” said Kane. These students are meeting the requirements for high school and college at the same time. The requirement for credit is passing the course.

Kane knows that saving money is very important. Did you know that the Early College Lowell program saves students a full year of tuition estimated to cost between \$8,000.00 and \$10,000.00 at an in- state community college. Not only is tuition covered, but students also receive a laptop, and the cost of books and materials are covered for each class. Three credit classes are

taught to juniors and seniors on campus, where students can experience the college classroom and participate and student activities and services. Kane was excited to learn that one credit freshman and sophomore classes were offered at Lowell High School. These classes are attended by all Lowell High School attendees. The curriculum focuses on career development, interest surveys, and value clarification. Another one credit class focuses on healthy decision making.

Kane wondered what type of support services are available. He learned that support professionals are available at both Lowell High School and Middlesex Community College. Services provided include helping students with career planning, assisting in selecting classes, linking students with tutors, mentors, and student advisors, and offering workshops to students and parents. To be admitted into the program students are required to fill out an application and provide their high school transcripts. Junior and Senior participants are asked to complete an additional year of college after graduation. Kane thought that was extremely smart since at the end of that year the student would

have achieved or would be close to attaining an associate’s degree. For more information on enrollment in Early College Lowell, send an email to [earlycollege@lowell.k12.ma.us](mailto:earlycollege@lowell.k12.ma.us).


After a student earns an associate’s degree, Early College Promise allows students to transfer their credits to a 4 year in state school to work towards a bachelor’s degree. Kane was interested in learning what classes and majors of study were available. He would like to share this list with you of potential classes - Graphic Design, General Biology, Public Speaking, Film and Society, Introduction to Engineering, English Composition and Intro to Psychology, to name a few.

Like you, Kane loves to see students excited about learning and focused on a career path that feels purposeful and personally fulfilling. He was excited to learn about this opportunity for Lowell High School students. The Greater Lowell Tech has a similar opportunity. As Kane always says, “keep your eyes open when opportunity knocks.”

Woof


Kane Peaslee  
Columnist, Valley Patriot ☺

### KANE'S KORNER



#### EARLY COLLEGE LOWELL

#### GET YOUR SMART ON!



# Destroying Democracy in Order to Save it

### Lenny Mirra

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

For a party that claims to be so concerned about protecting democracy Democrats are working awfully hard to make sure you don’t get a chance to vote for the “wrong” candidates.

It’s not enough that the party worked diligently to discard legal ballots and make sure they never get counted they’re now keeping legitimate candidates off ballots entirely. And it’s not just by abusing the Constitution to keep Trump off, which even a partisan progressive like Senator Warren disagrees with. They’re now doing it to their own candidates.

In an effort to rig the vote in Florida,

Democrats voted to not allow US Rep. Dean Phillips (D-Minnesota), or anyone else for that matter, on their primary ballot. They submitted only Joe Biden’s name to the Secretary of State which means not only will he win automatically, but the contest won’t even appear on the ballot. How’s that for democracy!

I spoke to Phillips at a campaign stop in Exeter, NH where he spoke to a small crowd in a bookstore and openly explained how his own party was screwing him over to allow Biden to win the nomination without any challenge. “Americans would expect the absence of democracy in Theran, not Tallahassee. Our mission as Democrats is to defeat authoritarians, not become them.”

Phillips is a serious candidate with an impressive record and someone Democrats should be promoting instead of disenfranchising voters to once again rig a primary for a preferred insider like they did in 2016. They seem to have forgotten how that turned out.

This is not to imply that Republicans haven’t done their fair share in trampling democracy. Their apparent nominee for president openly called for his VP to reject electoral votes to keep himself in office, and we have him on a recording telling election workers in Georgia to “find” him 11,000 votes.

This is an issue where much derided “bothsiderism” should be employed so that voters are aware of just how evil and corrupt our political parties really

are. Few news outlets will report this so we’re fortunate that writers like Matt Taibii, formerly of Rolling Stone, is exposing a lot of this.

Taibii reports how back in 2004 Democrats feared Ralph Nader pilfering votes from John Kerry and tried to keep him off the ballot with ridiculous legal challenges. The Democratic state Jim Pederson claimed outright “Our first objective is to keep Nader off the ballot.” Kerry himself warned Nader he had 2,000 lawyers at his disposal and would do “everything within the law” to win by keeping Nader off the ballot.

Nader’s campaign manager Theresa Amato wrote an entire book about

DEMOCRACY: PAGE 21



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# Good News for Lawrence Police Firefighters Want Fairness

Mike Delaney  
LAWRENCE FIREFIGHTER

EDITORS NOTE: These are the thoughts and opinions of Mike Delaney and not the Firefighters’ Union or any other group he’s affiliated with.

Congratulations to the Lawrence Police for finally securing a well-deserved contract from the city. It’s truly a commendable achievement for the department after years of advocating for fair compensation.

However, it’s hard not to express disappointment when juxtaposing this success with the city’s failure to offer a similarly respectful contract to the firefighters of Lawrence. Local 146 took the city for their word when they were repeatedly told that there was no money beyond the 3% COLA offered, while seeking a contract similar to the Police Department, including an additional 2% for hazardous duty pay, a benefit received by many similar fire departments in the Commonwealth. The sudden settlement of the police contract after the city’s repeated claims of financial constraints does raise questions and frustrations.

The question of whether the administration really believes Local 146 wants to get every dime that they have is not a valid one. It’s essential to underscore that fair, sustainable contracts benefit both the firefighters and the community they serve. Many members of Local 146 are from the city and are committed to giving their all for the next 30+ years in providing the highest quality of service to the residents, business owners, and visitors of the City of Lawrence.

The disparity becomes all the more glaring when considering the significant budget increases, particularly the mayor’s budget almost doubling, along with substantial wage increases for non-union inner circle members. Additionally, the stark contrast in wage increases between the police and the firefighters during the same 3-year period does raise concerns about equity and fair treatment.

The recent settlement of the police contract, including a 3% raise each year for the next three years and a 2% increase for the post commission, certainly highlights the need for transparency and equitable treatment across all public service sectors. Such disparities only emphasize the need for fair and just treatment for all public servants.

The disparity in treatment becomes starkly evident when one considers the dedication and hard work put in by Local 146 Lawrence Firefighters, who have not been given the same consideration. The support and endorsement provided by Local 146 to the administration only adds to the frustration, as they find themselves seemingly relegated to a back seat despite their contributions and support.

If the city was being honest about its finances when negotiating and finalizing a contract with Local 146 but moments later found they did have the money to pay the police what firefighters were also asking just weeks after settling with firefighters, the administration should do the right thing and offer an MOA to firefighters, offering that same 2% increases over this contract to show the respect for both departments is equal. JUST MY THOUGHTS. ◇



# The Bellwether Tolls

Philippe Thibault  
VALLEY PATRIOT DRACUT CONTRIBUTOR

I now have proof the Town of Dracut never ratified the United States Constitution. And with the likes of Alison Genest, Joseph DiRocco, and Jennifer Kopsinski, I don’t hold much hope for it in the future. At a Zoning Bylaw Review Committee meeting on January 11th, the Chairman informed members of the public, and in particular myself, that participation in the public meetings would no longer be permitted. This is government work, and the public cannot interrupt those who will make the rules that the unwashed must follow.

What is even more disturbing than this incident, is the preceding events leading to the expulsion of public input. Chair Alison Genest is a process fanatic. She needs to be since she really has no thought other than power and how to maintain an iron rule. Process is an ignorant man’s politics. She has convinced the Chair of the ZBRC, that committee is not to do the best work they can. They are to do the “will of the Selectmen,” specifically, the Troika listed above.

There is a lot to unpack after the last Zoning Bylaw Review Committee meeting on January 11th. The Selectmen have been trying to ramp up participation by the town citizens for years. Alison Genest has now forced a committee seeking citizen participation to renege on that promise to include the public. The takeaway is that the government is more important than the public voice. “You the people,” the squalid masses, will do what you are told. You will dine on the sausage being made for you without contribution, for those with food allergies, you may need to go hungry.

The Gang of Three have also convinced Town Counsel to provide cover in the form of justification to the prohibition to public input. Providing rationalization rather than legal advice, Counsel went on a diatribe about public meetings getting out of hand and degrading into complete mayhem. Counsel has little faith in the Chair of the ZBRC maintaining order with the public. Counsel’s opinion goes squarely against that of the State Attorney General and the Guidelines for Open Meetings. “Although public participation is entirely within the chair’s discretion, the Attorney General encourages public bodies to allow as much public participation as time permits.” Alison Genest has

little regard for the opinion of others: appointed officials, elected officials, or the public.

It is just a matter of time before Alison Genest and her cohorts will try to lay claim on every board and committee within town. Genest has already asserted that her position as someone elected is dominate to all others. The appointed boards are by that logic subordinate to those elected. Genest has taken it upon herself to manipulate all autonomous boards. This whole incident of restricting public participation by the public during a ZBRC meeting is only the first barrage. Genest could have simply taken her issues to the ZBRC Chair and questioned his decision, but in her mind, he is the hired help and is not entitled to an opinion that differs from hers. How long will it be before the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals must acquiesce? What about the Finance Committee, a committee appointed by the Town Moderator, an elected office. “None can oppose the will of Sauron.” Alison Genest’s leadership only brings divisiveness and chaos.

The upcoming election will have far reaching ramifications. This year is a single seat. The Selectmen are elected in a rotation series over a three-year period. Two seats for each of two years and a single seat for the last of the three-year cycle. The lone seat has been held over the past five terms by Joseph DiRocco. He has not only enabled Alison Genest’s style of government, but he has also cultivated it in this farming community. Genest’s government is similar to DiRocco’s own style of intimidation and retribution, she is a faithful apprentice. DiRocco’s last victory had him proclaiming this would be his last term. He lamented the negative campaigning by the opposition, when it was in fact his own negative political record being brought to light. Dorian Gray’s picture is handsome compared to DiRocco’s and Genest’s.

An informed citizenry is the best bellwether for a good government. Understand those who you are voting for. Question the candidates on their ideas and their assertions. The truth does not mind scrutiny, deception cannot abide interrogation. Once the election is completed, stay informed. Continue to ask questions. Dracut Hall is like Tammany Hall, Joe DiRocco and Alison Genest smirking “what are you going to do about it.” ◇

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# Neville Chamberlain Redux

Theodore Xenakis  
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

“We don’t seek a war with Iran. We’re not looking for a wider conflict in the Middle East.” Those are the words of White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby on January 29th. News flash Mr. Kirby. We are already at war with Iran!

When a hostile nation arms and directs militia groups in a region that surrounds US military assets to launch missiles and rockets, that’s war. Mr. Kirby and his boss, Joe Biden, can wish all they want that we are not under attack by Iran through its heavily armed militia proxies. I won’t even mention the missiles that have targeted our troops from Iran itself.

As we all know, on Sunday, January 28th, three American service men were killed and 25 wounded in a drone attack on a US base in Jordan near the Syrian border. The drone struck a living quarters for our troops, thereby contributing to the high casualty number. “America’s heart is heavy” said Mr.

Biden on the day of the attack. Well, I know what is also heavy. The bombs that are sitting in the bomb bays of our aircraft that thus far have been held back, not to mention our cruise missiles and other weapons.

The Biden administration from top to bottom is afraid of Iran. Plain and simple. Talk about the tail wagging the dog.

In 1991, America unleashed a relentless attack on Iraq, completely obliterating its vaunted Republican Guard and one-million-man army in a matter of weeks. Our mistake was to try to make Iraq a democracy, the same mistake we made in Afghanistan.

I suggest that America now do the same to Iran. Decimate their military assets, infrastructure, and other military capabilities, including their nuclear program, and then come home. Let the Mullahs explain that to the Iranian people. Let them struggle with the chaos that will ensue.

Forget any coalition or UN resolution. Our forces have been attacked. It is high

time to put this rabid dog down.

So, what’s the hold up? Incredibly, Mr. Biden and his diplomats are still trying to resurrect the nuclear deal that Biden’s youthful mentor cobbled together with haggard John Kerry, he of “do as I say and not as I do” climate czarist stature.

As Iran keeps the US busy with its proxy destabilizers in the Middle East, the Mullahs are ramping up a bigger and bigger supply of nuclear bomb grade uranium. Of course, neither Iran’s proliferating nuclear program or support of its militia proxies would be happening without the gift from first Obama and now Biden of billions of dollars.

The lifting of sanctions on Iran upon the inception of the nuclear deal in 2016 enabled Iran to sell its oil on the international market, thereby giving it an annual boost in revenues of \$160 Billion. That deal also prohibited Iran from importing or exporting conventional weapons until 2020. It also curtailed Iran’s ability to import of ballistic missile technology until 2023. That ban expired

last October.

Is it any wonder Iran is flexing its muscle? First Obama and then Biden have played patsies to a theocratic nation that sponsors terrorism around the globe. This is the same group that took American hostages in 1979 under the presidency of Jimmy Carter, another Democrat with no stomach for confrontation.

Let’s remember that once Ronald Reagan was inaugurated in January of 1981, the Mullah’s set free the hostages. Iran was also docile while Trump was in office and told them to stuff their nuclear deal.

Much like the open border that Mr. Biden has condoned, if not promoted, Iran’s nuclear program presents a real national security danger to us and our allies. Will Israel stand by and do nothing while watching a country that vows “death to Israel” build a nuclear warhead? What about Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and other Muslim allies in the region, who are in religious conflict

# No More Divide and Conquer in 2024 America

Kenneth Willette  
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

The concept of original sin has fueled a global debate since even before the dawn of Judeo-Christian thought. It is a belief system for some followers who assert that humans entering this world are predisposed to sin due to the actions of Adam. As a Christian, I would often focus on the morality and compassion of Jesus’s parables, rather than rely on a strict interpretation of the bible. However, the philosophy of original sin is instrumental in this column since many people throughout our nation’s history were cast with the societal stigma and burden of being born into a certain race, gender, religion, or ethnicity.

For centuries, millions of African Americans and women were treated as property, limited in their mobility, and often only permitted in the shadows. Millions of African Americans were enslaved, abused, and deprived of any wages for their hard-earned labor. Many women were considered subservient through marriage in the eyes of the court, relegated to only household responsibilities, and denied access to education except for some rare exceptions. Women couldn’t vote nationwide until the early 20th century, and they couldn’t even apply for credit until the time frame when I was born. Arranged marriages, dowries and underage brides were not uncommon practices. Many African Americans and women still rose above the societal obstacles and excelled in the areas of literature, civil rights, science, health care, and business.

All these past transgressions certainly serve as a dark stain on our national soul. But instead of acknowledging our tremendous progress, we are singling out certain groups in the 21st century for mandatory indoctrination. Rather than learning the historical lessons

of slavery, the subjugation of women and the structural discrimination of other racial and ethnic groups, we unfortunately are witnessing prominent politicians in 2024 who seek to stigmatize and punish innocent citizens for the perceived sins of deceased generations.

Notice how some political leaders and academics, who are so intent on promoting inclusion, often are the same misguided individuals who are most guilty of exclusionary policies, discriminatory actions, and unverified stereotypes. For example, affirmative action, which was forthrightly banned by a Supreme Court decision, has been proven to discriminate against Asians who had better test scores. To give an overly favorable admissions process to some applicants, university administrators were then denying equal protection to other historically oppressed minorities (Chinese Americans who were subjected to past immigration quotas and xenophobic laws, and Japanese Americans who were forced into internment camps). How is that not morally reprehensible, replacing one form of structural discrimination with another?

Mind you, I am also totally against legacy admissions—just because your rich daddy attended Harvard doesn’t entitle you automatically to a Golden Ticket from Willy Wonka. Another cancerous theory is that whites have an ingrained proclivity toward supremacy thoughts and aspirations. This would be ludicrous as a theory if not for very serious leaders who assert it as Gospel truth. They have a warped interpretation of American history. Last time I checked, Irish and Italian Americans were identified as whites dating back to Europe. But for many years in this country, Irish needed not apply for jobs in certain neighborhoods. Italians faced the same wrath. White Catholics were

falsely accused of taking marching orders from the Pope when dealing with politics and economics. Do you honestly think these aggrieved populations would then collectively engage in supremacy over any other group? How about white Jews who survived Hitler’s Final Solution?

Obviously, these reverse racists never read J.D. Vance’s autobiography, *Hillbilly Elegy*. J.D. grappled against turbulent and painful events during his youth. His father disappeared. His mother, a hardcore drug addict, was constantly involved with the criminal justice system. J.D.’s only North Star constant was his unbreakable grandmother who guided him through the stormy seas of a dysfunctional and broken family. Because of that moral compass, J.D. rose above the aftermath, joined the Marines, graduated from Yale Law School, and now currently serves as a United States Senator. Does his life journey cry out supremacy or a mandate for inclusion reeducation? Absolutely not!

If you look at the infant mortality and drug abuse rates for economically underserved West Virginia and Baltimore, you may be surprised by the shocking similarities. These proponents of universally assigning whites to a supremacy class should read about a real apartheid nation, because their actions would be familiar to the F.W. de Klerk regime. Born a Crime, written by former Daily Show host Trevor Noah, is a fascinating book about him being ostracized by many groups in South Africa because of his mixed race. Interracial marriages and relationships were strictly forbidden. If the authorities found out that Trevor’s parents (a white European dad and a Black South African mother) gave birth to a mixed-race child, both parents would have been arrested and jailed for years.

The evil genius of South Africa



apartheid was that whites, other races and even tribes were assigned regions to reside and were pitted against one another. Sanctioned geographical divisions, tribal animosities and stereotypical behaviors ran rampant, which was exactly the mission of those in power. The parallels are striking in how Radical Left America identifies certain people despite flourishing diversity, judges the motives of other groups without learning history’s wrongs, and hosts separate public events without inviting others. A textbook divide and conquer mentality. Plus, a heavy dose of gaslighting for any non-believers.

There is even a controversial professor at Princeton who teaches a class where she encourages Black students to classify themselves as disabled. How demented is that professor? The racism is mindboggling if you seriously claim that all African Americans are incapable of competing in an equal opportunity society without special treatment. Maybe the exclusionary fraudsters and supremacy accusers can take a moment to read Martin Luther King to learn what a nonviolent, faith-based, character-driven, and brotherhood-rich environment can be realized if we don’t divide and segregate. Keep MLK’s Dream alive! ♦





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TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK

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First thing I see on the "news" when I get to my desk just now is some idiot Republican Congressman crying about how social media is having a negative influence on kids "especially the body images of young girls" and "We MUST Do something to stop THISSSSSSSSS!!!!"

THIS from the same people



Alex Talcott



FINN

it called Grand Illusion. Democrats haven’t stopped.

They’re doing the same now with third party group No Labels because they dare to talk about running a third option in an election where most Americans don’t like the elderly ones propped up by the established parties.

Advocacy groups for Biden are warning them “If you have one fingernail clipping of a skeleton in your closet, we will find it...We are going to come at you with every gun we can possibly find.” This is the kind of “democracy” that would make Vladimir Putin proud.

Closer to home, Democrats are not shy about ignoring democracy in keeping their corrupt one-party grip on our government. My sources tell me that certain State Senators actively engaged in stifling signature gathering for a ballot question that would allow our Auditor, Diana Dizoglio, to audit the legislature. And they’ve even ignored ballot initiatives passed by voters, the very definition of democracy, on issues ranging from tax cuts to capital punishment to campaign finance reform.

It’s very obvious that both parties want us to believe they’re destroying democracy in order to save it. Voters shouldn’t believe it. ♦



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BENEATH THE SURFACE  
WITH PAUL MURANO

The Taylor Swift  
Phenomenon

Like every normal guy who doesn't have an adolescent daughter, I knew almost nothing about Taylor Swift. What I've heard is she's a lingering pop star capitalizing on young women's tribulations with former "relationships" – a kind of a #MeToo of rock.

Additionally, as a long-fulfilled (and recently suffering) New England Patriots fan, I'm a follower of the NFL, despite its recent ("End Racism") turn to wokeism. So, I'm fully aware of the Kelce-Swift phenomenon that is capturing the imagination of the gossip media, and more recently cable news, all the way to the Super Bowl. Whether it's all genuine or tainted for purposes of publicity or politics, I don't know and don't much care.

What I do find appalling, however – and all of us should – is the cultural ethos that has led millions of girls and young women for decades to take solace in the lamentations of artists like Swift and Alanis Morissette.

The modern world, infected by the sexual revolution, has created the fundamental ethic of adult consent to differentiate what is morally acceptable from unacceptable. If one consents to something, it's good; if not, it's evil. This is what the #MeToo movement and our society at large does not understand: Abuse is not defined simply by a lack of consent.

The realm of sex is very different from other parts of human nature and carries with it deep implications. Sex outside of marriage violates people at their core, and no adult consent or capricious denials can ever change this. It leaves people wounded and jaded. Just listen to the lyrics.

This artificial demarcation of adult consent was created in part so that men may use women without consequence and women may feel "empowered" as being equal to men. The result has been 80 million abortions, a 50% divorce rate, a soaring suicide rate, countless people trying to cope with prescription meds, and the Alanis Morissettes of the world screeching from the depths of their being, at least internally, "I'm here to remind you of the mess you left when you went away. It's not fair!" (You Oughta Know 1995)

Isn't it interesting that this common experience of lifelong woundedness has still not been motivation enough to stop



the revolution in its tracks. This futility is a testament to the addictive power of sex, when reason is forced to take a back seat. Have you ever suggested in public that pornography be outlawed? Watch the visceral reaction you get from those who use free speech as their pretense.

There was a reason that sex was held to be reserved for marriage for several millennia before the revolution. It was understood by most that it was the unique privilege of committed spouses expressing and confirming their lifelong covenantal bond. This norm of the natural law protects people from lasting wounds, preserves love as an unconditional commitment, and provides a secure environment for potential offspring to be welcomed.

The message coming from parents, pastors, friends, and the media must be clear and unambiguous, albeit counter-cultural. Until we communicate this truth with courage and conviction, the powerful in society will continue to make money off people's pain. And even sadder, formerly innocent women like Brittany Spears, Alanis Morissette, and Taylor Swift will continue to be poster girls for this faux "female empowerment" movement – whose end is pain, bitterness, and broken dreams.

Paul Murano is producer and host of Beneath the Surface videocast. He is author of The Devil-ution of Society (available at Amazon.com), and has taught college philosophy & theology for over 15 years. Check out his website at www.Paulmurano.com and Youtube channel at www.Youtube.com/Veritas3737, E-mail Paul at PJDM@aol.com.

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Dr. Pierre Ghassibi  
VALLEY PATRIOT MEDICAL COLUMNIST

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We do not much like to exercise in general, but we can always find something enjoyable to do. The more the better. Even jumping in place safely

while holding dumbbells for half a minute three times a day is excellent. If we have bad knees, we can exercise in bed or in a chair, or in a swimming pool. The results are very tangible. The effect on stress and pain is a big bonus.

Let us now examine the plant based diet: less arterial obstruction, less heart failure, less diabetes, less high blood pressure, less osteoporosis, less dementia, less diverticulitis, less constipation, less cancer, but also less pollution, less greenhouse gases ( look it up ), more food to feed the growing world population, less animal cruelty. Look at online videos of slaughterhouses: animals are tortured before and during slaughter; cows are milked to death for our milk and cheese. It is not praying in our prayer houses that leads to salvation of the soul, it is compassion.

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Craig E Popp, Li Niu & Shiyong  
Chen, \$335,000, 6 Crescent Dr Unit 10  
Andrew A Caffrey Jr & Elise P  
Caffrey, Swoops Property LLC,  
\$315,000, One Elm Square Unit 2E  
Radu Andrei Ivan, Li Niu & Shiyong  
Chen, \$310,000, 14 Longwood Dr Unit  
9

LAWRENCE

6061T6 LLC & ZDN LLC & NDZ  
LLC, Vincent P Helfrich Jr Tr & Joseph  
J Helfrich Tr & 39 Merrimack Street  
Realty Trust, \$1,600,000, 43 Merrimack  
St  
Jonathan L Santiago, Antoine J  
& Rose K Loreus, \$870,000, 44-46  
Chester St  
Lisa S Muraco Tr & L S Muraco  
Realty Trust, Hamilton A Terrero  
Payano & Elena A Payano De Regalado,  
\$820,000, 21-23 Montgomery St  
Xavier Martinez Tr & Glenly Madera  
Tr & 7-9 Ohio Avenue Realty Trust,  
Scarlet Mori Herrera & Lauteria Amaro  
& Ysabel Herrera Amaro, \$795,000, 7-9  
Ohio Ave  
Elsa & Merlyn Properteries LLC,  
Adriano F Bano Maza & Maria  
Teresa Charco Bano, \$780,000, 28-30  
Magnolia St  
Robert E Runge Jr & Kathleen A  
Runge, Rosa Ferreira & Cristina J  
Ferreira, \$758,000, 32-34 Dracut St  
Nancy Pepin Est & Vinalisis  
Fernandez/Vinalisis P Fernandez,  
Brian M Munoh & Genesis A Mundu,  
\$730,000, 440 South Union St  
Michael & Christine Pelletier, Chloe  
LLC, \$700,000, 31-33 Garfield St  
Levette Yael Malachi Cruz &  
Christian A Fajardo Mendoza, Fausto  
E Delacruz & Elisa M De La Cruz

Martinez & Genara Ortega, \$656,000,  
210 Ferry St  
Nancy Acosta & Alexis Rosario,  
Yaely Gonzalez Morillo, \$650,000, 55-  
55A Dana St  
Blasina Garcia, Juliana A Garcia,  
\$642,105, 22-24 Saxonía Ave  
Lindsey M Grasso/Lindsey M  
Tridenti, Keilly Moronta Suarez &  
Mackensey Gonzales Aybar, \$640,000,  
15-17 Durant St  
Gabriel & Ana I Berrios, Joshua  
Gwan & Carolina Garcia , \$612,000,  
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Merrimack Valley Real Estate  
Solutions LLC, Carlos J Quezada &  
Franchesca Delgado, \$612,000, 41-43  
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James W Woodall, Jorge Luis De  
La Cruz Martinez, \$595,000, 151-155  
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Gardiner, \$465,000, 7 Dana St  
Fulvio & Rosa Montefusco, Ramon  
S Disla Abreu & Mayra A Contreras De  
Disla, \$450,000, 46 Thorton St  
JM Brothers LLC, Carlos De Leon  
Lopez & Nicolasa V Felipe-Perez,  
\$405,000, 76 Exchange St  
Padilla Real Estate LLC, Yulianna  
P Velez & Monica P Garcia De Leon,  
\$385,000, 142 Oxford St Unit C  
Joseph & Marianne LeBlanc, Bay  
Flow LLC, \$350,000, 264-266 Bailey St  
Michael J Curley & Maureen B  
Toohey-Curley, 33 Investment Group  
LLC, \$350,000, 653 Lowell St  
Richard F & Kerri Crockett/Kerri Ann  
Legrand, Arnold Jason & Frida Bradour  
Baerga, \$330,000, 66 Byron Ave Unit 1  
Boberin LLC, Daniel Dudensing,  
\$257,250, 262 East Haverhill St Unit 23  
Anthony Ansaldi Tr/V Anthony  
Ansaldi Tr & Cameron-Bishop/Janton  
Trust, Jose Manuel Ramirez, \$255,000,  
24 Inman St Unit 31  
V Anthony Ansaldi Tr/Anthony  
Ansaldi Tr & Cameron-Bishop/Janton  
Trust, Yong Chen, \$250,000, 24-26  
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Martinez De La Cruz, \$245,000, 92  
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Inc, Reyes LLC, \$200,000, 85  
Manchester St  
Richard L Cote, Daher Group Inc,  
\$185,000, 109-111 Phillips St  
Diane L Eysermans, Long Term  
Rentals LLC, \$85,000, 69 Abbott St  
Unit 69-1

METHUEN

157-159 Merrimack LLC, Goldwetha  
Properties Solutions LLC, \$1,655,000,  
157-159 Merrimack St, Golf Ave  
Toll Ma Land III LP, Palm Ave Rental  
LLC, \$1,127,057, 3 Cardinal Rd Unit  
178  
Toll Ma Land III LP , Daniel T  
Murphy & Sharon H Yen, \$932,759, 7  
Cardinal Rd Unit 177  
Nancy Ciampi , David K Whisple &  
Donna Melillo-Whisple, \$925,000, 41  
Arrowwood St  
Nicola Currao Tr & Anna Maria Tr/  
Anna Maria C Binanti Tr & Currao-  
Binanti Revocable Trust , Frantzy C  
Balan & Lusette Balan & Marie Victor-  
Semexant , \$850,000, 110 North St  
Charles J Savas Tr & Charles J Savas  
Revocable Trust, Kevin J & Cynthia A

Kilday, \$850,000, 53 Phoebe St Unit 31  
Toll MA Land III LP, Theresa &  
Robert E Doherty Jr, \$826,033, 1  
Cardinal Rd Unit 180  
Trenton Realty LLC, Miko Devedzic,  
\$789,000, 22 Brayton St  
Johanna R & Anthony O Villa,  
Johanny Garcia & Annie Melissa Reyes,  
\$760,000, 327-329 Broadway  
Revive Homes LLC, Emile S &  
Georgette Maroun, \$755,000, 266  
Hampstead St  
Rosann M Silva & Janet A Bramhall  
& George L Mancini & Louis G  
Mancini, Young Hee Tr & Insoon Shin  
Tr & Won Ju Realty Trust, \$735,000, 20  
Kerri Ann Cir  
Five C Construction LLC, Hildo  
Mateus De Souza Jr, \$730,000, 1 Frost  
Ave  
Perrault Family Limited Partnership,  
Keyla & Eduardo Rodriguez-Santiago,  
\$710,000, 96-98 Railroad St  
Winston Alanzar/Wiston Almanzar,  
Gregory Peralta & Ana Roxanna Lora,  
\$700,000, 95-97 Tenney St  
Thomas P & Susan N Barrett , Ana  
Carolina Costa, \$689,000, 166-168  
Warwich St  
Jowamar Co LLC, Wiston Almanzar,  
\$650,000, 2 Osgood St, 269 Broadway  
Norman F Meservey Jr & Francine  
Meservey, Yoeuri Gomez & Dominga  
De La Rosa & Yendi Gomez De La  
Rosa, \$650,000, 138 Cross St  
Frank E & Roberta Blake, Sanjog KC  
& Sunita Nepal, \$592,000, 2 Coronet  
Ave  
Kristina Dahbour Tr & Joseph F  
Pittella Irrevocable Trust, Scott &  
Colleen Reichlen, \$590,000, 18 Ferry  
Rd Unit 9  
Joan V & John J Tremblay Trs &  
Paul E Tremblay & Joan V Tremblay  
Irrevocable Trust, Edith Kaselis,  
\$590,000, 27 Butternut Ln  
Christopher Cebula, Elizabeth  
Noel Semon & Jennie Marques Silva,  
\$575,000, 37 Houston Ave  
Randall F Hart Tr & Benchmark  
Realty Trust, Joeser Pierre & Belgie  
Othelo, \$560,000, 22 Magna Rd  
Richard H & Leslie M Scholtz, Nicole  
Coakley, \$535,000, 5 Harris St  
Carmelo A & Annalisa Cali/Annalisa  
Domingo, Ulises De Los Santos  
Mercedes & Dianelba Reyes De De Los  
Santos, \$525,000, 18 Gaywood Cir  
Shihmei J Chiang, Frederick A Curtis  
IV & Rona S Weiss, \$520,000, 48  
Landing Dr Unit 48  
James & Biurky Salinas, Thomas  
Foley, \$505,000, 55 Cypress Ave  
Antoinette R & Paul J Burke, Ashlee  
& Kyle Wolfram, \$504,000, 6 Bridle  
Path Ln  
True North Properties LLC, Fredy A  
Us Suhul & Blanca Odilia Mazariegos,  
\$500,000, 182 Merrimack St  
Patricia G Grant Tr & Albert E Grant  
Jr Family Trust, Arody Arturgo Fuentes  
Soto & Glenda Cruz, \$480,000, 4  
Quebec St  
Debra A & Glenn J LaPlante, Jhoel  
DeLaCruz, \$480,000, 133 North Lowell  
St  
Leroy Richards Est & Elaine  
McKinney, Edrine Astremont, \$480,000,  
12 Francella Rd  
Jennifer L Jankowski, Paola Rosario  
Hiraldo, \$475,000, 137 Tyler St

Mary E Napolitano & Zacharia Matar,  
Rachel Ricotta, \$465,000, 1 Hemenway  
St  
J & J Valley Homes LLC, Hilma I  
Hidalgo & Richard S Hidalgo Abreu &  
Hilma M Jaquez-Gonzalez, \$465,000, 5  
Field Ave  
Ronald J Pitocchelli/Ronald J  
Pitochelli, Mauro Domingos Fortunato  
& Sonia Martins Fortunato, \$450,000,  
4-6 Belmont St  
Richard M Morin, Andre Turgeon &  
Lauren Swanson, \$440,000, 20 Dale St  
Horace Fazio, Henry Gonzalez &  
Eliezer Sillfa, \$430,000, 10 Derry Rd  
Betty Joan & David Walter Franklin,  
Sylvia Nalumagga, \$420,000, 69 Ayer  
St  
Paula Paolino & Frank Piro Est ,  
Thanh P Vo & Linh Nguyen, \$410,000,  
29 Kensington Ave  
Scott A Akroyd & Cynthia J Akroyd  
Est, Thane R Cumming, \$375,000, 13  
Pinedale Ave  
Walter J & Rose E Pienta & Bank  
of New York Mellon Trust Co NS Tr/  
Financial Freedom Senior Funding  
Corp, Random Properties Acquisition  
Corp III, \$354,597.64, 50 Woburn St  
Darrel Peruch, Monica Margaret  
Sulkowski, \$337,500, 945 Riverside Dr  
Unit 11C  
James J Mocera Tr & Maureen Neel-  
Desrochers Tr & Mocera Family Trust,  
Thomas V Kennedy Jr, \$281,900, 46  
Ashford St Unit 5  
Santander Bank N A, Gjon Gjeggj,  
\$280,000, 45 Kensington Ave  
Katherine J Robinson Tr & Katherine  
J Robinson Trust, Ramfy Castillo,  
\$274,000, 48 High St Unit 18  
GwenLily Holdings LLC, Rafael A  
Castillo & Ramfy Castillo, \$250,000, 15  
Pilgrim Cir Unit A  
Darlene Murphy, Vicky E Arana  
Galicía, \$212,000, 50 Dansbury Dr Unit  
4  
Joselyn A Lebron & Shane A  
Waterman, Rechdan 10 Danbury Dr  
Methuen LLC, \$195,000, 10 Danbury  
Dr Unit 3  
Sterling Ventures Inc, Abreu Holdings  
LLC, \$185,000, 29 Baremeadow St  
Celeste C Clemens, Alpha Beta Realty  
LLC, \$125,000, 2E Constitution Way  
Unit 16E

NORTH ANDOVER

Carl W Berger Tr & Santo Mangano  
Irrevocable Trust, Eric Broadhurst  
& Sean Nickerson, \$2,200,000, 595  
Chickering Rd Unit 1-5  
James & Christa Connolly, Tushar  
& Andrianna Banerji, \$1,835,000, 35  
Hitching Post Rd  
Noah Goldstein, John & Nadia Davis  
& Allan Goldstein & Diane Dady-  
Goldstein, \$1,200,000, 31 Court St  
Jennifer L & David Herald, Dianne  
Anderson & Ashley Baxter & Cathryn  
Jonas, \$1,135,000, 453 Forest St  
Jeffrey P & Deborah M Manning,  
Patrick & Theresa O'Halloran,  
\$1,085,000, 9 Cobblestone Cir  
Michael E Sklar Tr & Randall Smith  
Tr & Lesley D Sklar Irrevocable Trust  
& Michael E Sklar 2020 Irrevocable  
Trust, Rachel Sommers & Marc Ash,  
\$980,000, 20 Nantucket Dr Unit B  
Mary E Cranston, Adam James

REAL ESTATE: NEXT PAGE



Zarrella, \$540,000, 42 Concord St  
Regina Merkel, Deborah Stevenson,  
\$455,000, 112 Mill Pond  
Lawrence & Leslie Welch & Kevin  
& Colleen Pineau, Ederson M Savi,  
\$450,000, 26 Glenwood St Unit B  
Frederick P Nothnagel & Marie J  
Bourgeois, Colby Leclerc, \$443,700, 92  
Surrey Dr Unit 92  
Frank A Kneeland, Karmin Bouziane  
& Dalila Benkhellat, \$427,000, 610  
Chickering Rd  
aymond R Corey Jr Est & Mary V  
Corey & Karen L Corey, Kreshnik  
Halilaj & Eda Kola, \$350,000, 148 Main  
St Unit S-329  
LS Property LLC, Nirav Patel,  
\$330,000, 30 Fernview Ave Unit 2  
GwenLily Holdings LLC, Artur &  
Rosa Boino, \$295,000, 6 Walker Rd  
Unit 6-2  
George P Bancroft, Merrimack Valley  
Builders Inc, \$285,000, 84 East Water St

with Iran, a conflict that dates back 1300 years?

As president, Mr. Biden is commander in chief of the greatest military force to ever grace this planet. Despite progressive obsessions with pronouns and other silly subjects, as well as the purging of top brass who don't embrace political correctness, our military establishment is still formidable.

So, what say you, Mr. Biden? Is it time to unleash the hounds or will you keep your tail tucked high up between your hind legs? The last world appeaser,

a kindly gentlemen named Neville Chamberlain, helped unleash World War II trying to reason with a madman. I suggest you take note of his reticence before another global conflagration comes to pass.

Theodore Xenakis is a Haverhill resident, graduate of Tufts University and Villanova University School of Law. He is a retired attorney and former City Solicitor for the City of Haverhill. He writes this column for The Valley Patriot. He can be reached at [TXenakis1951@gmail.com](mailto:TXenakis1951@gmail.com). ♦

A portrait of Mike Sullivan, a middle-aged man with grey hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and blue tie. He is smiling slightly. The portrait is framed by a blue border.

Mike Sullivan

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

Cell: 978-204-2758

Email: [sull33@aol.com](mailto:sull33@aol.com)



HERO: FROM PAGE 1

NOTEBOOK: FROM PAGE 20

trainer certification and Joint Fires Observation, as well as college, I decided to dive into working full time for the MA Army National Guard as a Recruiter.

For those out there who are considering the military and especially those young or in high school, and even those who haven’t considered or are undecided, as someone who joined the National Guard at 17, travelled the world, seen other people and how they have lived their lives over the years, do not hesitate to explore this opportunity. So many people count themselves out, get talked out of it by those with no experience or those who are jealous of others’ success, or are afraid to take the risk. The military should be a first choice not a last one. The military, especially the National Guard wants those who want to develop themselves, who are educated and intelligent. It offers every imaginable opportunity, not only the ability to serve your country, but to get a college education and degree for free or pass it to your spouse or children down the road, for those who immigrated service grants citizenship. Service in the guard is networking on steroids. In addition to helping build a resume with highly desired skills, certifications, and leadership experience the people you serve alongside are all citizen-soldiers. They all hold or have held civilian jobs, trade or own a business. At a young age and fresh out of high school this is paramount to setting yourself up for success. At a minimum, a three-year service obligation is the blink of an eye. When you’re in your late teens three years seems like a huge amount of time but now looking back as a 32-year-old Sergeant First Class with 15 years of service and a successful civilian and military career, 3 years is a blink.

The MA National Guard is the MOST historic military organization in the United States. The Massachusetts National Guard has some of the most deep-rooted history and has been involved in about every major conflict

since the Revolutionary War. Each unit under the MA Army National Guard has its own rich history and its involvement in each. As a 100% volunteer force, every member of the guard since its humble origins as “minutemen” has carried the torch. The first Salem Muster in Salem Massachusetts was a makeup of farmers, blacksmiths, and tradesmen. Today it has grown and evolved into some of the finest men and women in the country, all with their own backgrounds and skills. Serving our Nation in a military unit that has been defending our Nation since 1636, Sergeant First Class Chadwick Larter, a hero in our midst. If you want to pick up a musket and join him, call the Massachusetts National Guard!

The Merrimack Valley’s American Legion Posts ask all World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War Veterans, to call (603) 518-5368 and sign up for an Honor Flight to the Memorials in Washington DC! Veterans of all eras are asked to go the American Legion’s Web site [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org), and join the American Legion, our mission is working with Congress, Veterans, and the Community, preserving our Veteran’s Benefits for future generations and serving all Veterans and their families.

John Cuddy served in the US Navy’s Construction Battalions (also known as the Seabees) after retiring from the US Navy; he earned a bachelor’s in history and a master’s in economics from the University of Massachusetts on the Lowell Campus using the GI Bill. He has been employed in Logistics at FedEx for the last 26 years. If you know a World War II, Korean War, or Vietnam War Veteran who would like their story told, please email him at [John.Cuddy@Yahoo.com](mailto:John.Cuddy@Yahoo.com) ◇





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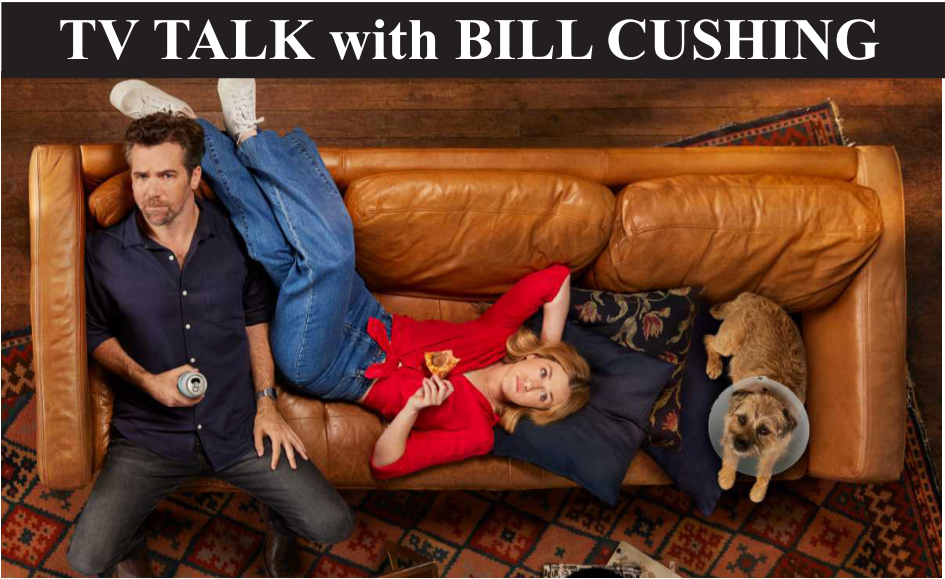
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TV TALK with BILL CUSHING

“Colin From Accounts”

Bill Cushing  
VALLEY PATRIOT TV COLUMNIST

‘Colin from Accounts,’ my recommendation for this month, is the story of two single strangers brought together by an accident. Ashley (Harriet Dyer), a 29-year-old medical student, is on her way to a safety seminar at the hospital when fortysomething microbrewer Gordon (Patrick Brammall) stops his car to let her cross the road. To thank him – and cheer herself up – she pulls the side of her top down briefly and goes on her way. Until, just behind her, she hears the sound of a distracted driver running over an unaccompanied dog.

Before you know it, they are on the hook for a \$12,000 vet’s bill and Ashley has moved into Gordon’s place to help take care of the dog while she looks for an apartment that will allow pets. Since the dog has no collar or tags, they decide to name him Colin. Jokingly they call him Colin from Accounts, but the name Colin sticks.

Thus begins the relationship of Gordon and Ashley, who would never have met at all without this incident. But whatever attraction there is between them, there’s a bigger issue — namely, the age gap between them. Colin is somewhere in his 40s and Ashley is 29. She doesn’t get his old man references — When Harry Met Sally, butlers traditionally being named Jeeves — but the gap becomes wider as things progress.

What follows is a very well-done, surprisingly insightful, and well-rounded romantic dramedy. Brammall and Dyer, real-life husband, and wife and who also wrote and created the show, are perfectly capable of not just carrying the episodes, but also being

funny at the correct beats and elevating their story arcs in unexpected ways.

The show is realistically written too, Ashley being portrayed as an honest representation of someone who’s having a bit of a tough time and coming up against constant hurdles that someone in her position would face. Her landlord selling all her possessions without her consent; her toxic mother showing up unannounced at the worst possible times; her ex-boyfriend and current colleague being an all-round jerk to her as she nurses a bruised heart. Gordon is also having a hard time, going through nerve-wracking checkups after undergoing treatment for cancer.

We are also spared the cringey dialogue that you get in many romantic comedies these days. The show doesn’t get corny. It’s honest and messy and complicated, as most love stories so often are. The series shows that, with the right set of actors, you don’t need to go overboard with physical comedy or over-the-top situations, and that life can be funny and tragic in its own way.

Besides the great chemistry of the two leads, the rest of the cast shouldn’t be overlooked either. The supporting actors are all terrific. All in all, ‘Colin From Accounts’ is charming, compelling, and comedically convincing.

‘Colin From Accounts’ has already been renewed for a second season and is available to stream on Paramount+.

If you have any questions about TV, you can email me at BillsTVTalk@gmail.com. I will answer all of your questions and will feature some of the questions I receive in a future Mailbag column. Follow me on Twitter and Instagram @BillsTVTalk and on Facebook at BillsTVTalk for daily up-to-the-minute TV news and discussion.◇

Speak Lord!

Peter Larocque  
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

God Bless you all in the Powerful Name of our Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

When you read these words, “Speak Lord,” what are your initial thoughts? Do you really think that it’s available in 2024 for the Lord to speak? To speak to you? Yes, you!

Jesus said in John 10:27, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” NKJV. When you pray, which is simply having a conversation with God, do you ever wait and listen for a response? This brings us right back to the original question, do you really think it’s available for the Lord to speak to you in 2024?

I am reminded of a passage in the Bible when God called a young boy of 12 years old to be a Prophet. His name was Samuel and I am not going to share the entire story at this time, but you can go ahead and read it for yourselves in 1 Samuel Chapters 1-3. We do read the following in 1 Samuel 2:26, “And the child Samuel grew in stature, and in favor both with the LORD and men.” NKJV. Next, we read in 1 Samuel 3:9, “... “Speak, LORD, for Your servant hears.” NKJV. Samuel is only 12 years of age when the Lord spoke to him as he was ministering before Eli the Priest in the temple. I am going to unpack these words, “Speak Lord for your servant hears,” for the remainder of this column.

In the Old Testament, the children of Israel had to go to a designated place, the tabernacle of meeting to hear God speak as it says in Exodus 29:42-46, “This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet you to speak with you. 43 And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory. 44 So I will consecrate the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. I will also consecrate both Aaron and his sons to minister to Me as priests. 45 I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God. 46 And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I am the LORD their God.” NKJV. So, as we read, in order to hear God Speak they had to go to a special designated place.

In the New Testament, things changed! We read the following in John 14:16-18, “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.” NKJV. Then in John 16:13-15, “However, when He, the Spirit of

truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.15 All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.” NKJV.

Today as Christians we have the Holy Spirit in us forever! He never leaves us! Meaning you can’t lose your salvation because your salvation is based upon the perfect finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. The innocent one, Jesus, freely gave His life for us, the guilty ones! So, God speaks to us, those who are saved by Grace, through the Holy Spirit who lives in us. The designated place God speaks to us today is in our spirit which is in us.

Jesus Christ’s sacrifice on the cross got rid of all and every middleman and anything that separated us from God! The Holy Spirit in us gives us direct access to the Throne Room of the Heart of God our Father. We read in Romans 8:38-39, “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” NKJV. We are inseparable!

So, now that we have established that nothing is between God and us and that God speaks directly to us, let’s be expectant to hear from Him. When we pray or talk to Him, listen for His response! Just like young Samuel, our posture should be, “Speak Lord for your servant Hears!” My fellow Christians, are you listening??? He is speaking to you!

Can I share one more truth with you? We read in John 1:12, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:” NKJV. Also in Galatians 4:7, “Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” KJV. Because You and I believe, we are no longer called servants but sons and daughters of God! We are family! Our Heavenly Father speaks to His children!

In 2024, let’s together make a pledge that when we talk to God, we will wait and listen for His response because going forward we will say, “Speak Lord for your child is listening”!

Love to all of you,  
Peter Larocque  
peterlarocque@hotmail.com ◇



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